



FINDING THE GREATNESS WITHIN

**SUPPORTING COLLEGE AND
CAREER SUCCESS FOR YOUNG
MEN OF COLOR**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Mentors can play an important role supporting youth as they make critical academic and career decisions during the transition to adulthood. For young people and their families, preparing for postsecondary opportunities can be an overwhelming, confusing, and stressful process. Having a mentor to help guide the process is beneficial for both young adults and their families.

As youth strive to be college and career ready, mentors can help youth identify and map out the specific tasks, experiences, resources, and skills needed to succeed. Mentors can also help youth maintain their motivation and focus by acknowledging and celebrating successes.

For boys and young men of color (BYMOC) from low-income households, mentors are especially important in preparing for college and career because of systemic barriers that limit opportunity and may impact their confidence and identity development. BYMOC, generally speaking, often lack access to professional role models who can provide information, resources, and guidance as they navigate complex processes for gaining admission to college and entry into meaningful career pathways. These challenges are exacerbated by negative social perceptions and low expectations that can curtail the aspirations of BYMOC.

This research brief was created by MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership to highlight national efforts to increase effective mentoring for BYMOC and was supported by JPMorgan Chase & Co. through its ongoing commitment to expand economic opportunity for young people through programs like The Fellowship Initiative (TFI) (**see “TFI Case Study” on page 8**). To develop this brief, MENTOR completed a literature review and interviewed TFI Fellows (high school and college students) and mentors (JPMorgan

Chase & Co. employee volunteers) to learn about how mentors can support young people as they prepare for college and careers. As an alum of the TFI program, Noah Morton shared, mentors can support young men of color as they prepare to transition to college and careers by helping them “find the greatness within.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOSING THE MENTORING GAP

Mentors play a critical role in the lives of two out of three youth in America today, and there is a critical need to close the mentoring gap for the estimated 16 million youth growing up without a caring adult in their lives, especially for young people who may not already have positive professional adult role models in their lives.

Youth themselves draw the connection between their experiences in mentoring relationships and their aspirations and outcomes as outlined in ***The Mentoring Effect*** (<http://bit.ly/1m6fUZi>), the first-ever nationally representative survey of 1,109 young people on the topic of mentoring produced by MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership with AT&T, Civic Enterprises, and Hart Research.



Young people with mentors report setting higher educational goals and are more likely to attend college than those without mentors.



Young adults who had mentors, particularly at-risk youth, are more likely to report engaging in productive and beneficial activities, such as sports, extracurricular activities, and volunteer projects, than youth without a mentor. These activities increase a young adult's self-confidence and self-esteem.



Youth with a mentor are more likely to hold a leadership position in a club, sports team, school council, or another group.



In both structured and informal mentoring relationships, the longer the mentoring relationship lasts, the greater the value for youth and the stronger the outcomes.

The Mentoring Effect revealed that one in three people do not have a mentor, but more research is needed to assess the mentoring gap for BYMOC. There have been studies and research on the mentoring gap for African-American youth. Dr. Bernadette Sanchez's (2016) review distilled 19 research studies and found that African-American youth were significantly more likely to have either an informal or formal mentor than White and Latina/o youth, indicating a difference based on race, gender, and ethnicity. However, other research suggested that there were gaps in certain kinds of mentors for African-American male youth.

Sanchez (2016) elaborated as follows:

In a study of 1,929 African-American youth between the ages of 12 and 18, it was found that girls were more likely to report an unrelated mentoring in their community (e.g., minister, teacher, counselor, older friend; Cooper, Brown, Metzger, Clinton, & Guthrie, 2013). An older study of 122 Black and White high school students (Hirsch et al., 2002) revealed that African-American girls (58%) were more likely to report having a significant nonparental adult male who has had an influence in their life compared to African-American boys (41%). Further, African-American girls reported more grandparent involvement in discussions about peer relationships compared to their African-American male counterparts (Hirsch et al., 2002).

While we are unclear about the mentoring gap for BYMOC specifically, we do know that BYMOC face disproportionate challenges on the path to becoming college and career ready. We also know that mentoring can support overcoming those challenges.

NATIONAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR BYMOC

The comprehensive literature review for Stanford University (Dukakis et al., 2012) offers the following regarding BYMOC:

Ample documentation in the literature links postsecondary educational disparities at least partially to the social experiences of boys and young men of color. In one review, for example, David Kirp (2010) has noted that “as early as kindergarten, nearly a quarter of African-American boys, three times more than their White counterparts, are already convinced that they lack the innate ability to succeed in school.” As they progress in their education, their behavior and social responses to school norms are frequently misread by teachers and school administrators as nonadaptive or otherwise problematic (Noguera, 2009), which often leads to a number of additional negative consequences, including disproportionality in school discipline and educational attainment in high school (Morris, 2012) (p. 4).

Gilberto Conchas (2006) observes that among high poverty families of Latino boys, the standard of academic success is often pegged at high school completion; after high school graduation, a number of Latino boys are expected to work and contribute to family income (p. 4).

Gender disparities in the early elementary school experience also may contribute to the gap in postsecondary completion between males and females. Nancy Lopez (2003) points out that where young girls tend to stay at home with adult figures and in school, boys are more often allowed to spend time outside of school away from home where peer influence is intensified (p. 4).

The White House (2014) announced My Brother's Keeper Alliance (MBKA) and provided the following evidence:

Data shows that boys and young men of color, regardless of socioeconomic background, are disproportionately at risk throughout the journey from their youngest years to college and career. For instance, large disparities remain in reading proficiency, with 86 percent of black boys and 82 percent of

Promising Practices

COLLEGE READINESS & PERSISTENCE

Communities In Schools (CIS) (www.communitiesinschools.org) and AT&T (<http://soc.att.com/2aNxOgY>) work together to help students achieve in school, graduate, and go on to college and career success. Communities In Schools is a national network of passionate professionals working in public schools to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. Since partnering in 2008, AT&T employee mentors have worked with over 20,000 students supported by 46 CIS affiliates across the country. The core mentoring program is called Career Exploration and it matches AT&T employee mentors with students in grades 8-12 to develop collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical-thinking skills. Students report that learning about diverse career options, getting career planning advice, and practicing for job interviews is what they enjoy most about their work with mentors.

“ My mentor came into my life and provided structure, did things with me that my parents couldn’t. He took me out to play ball, just sat and talked with me, and kept me from doing other things, like being in the streets.”

TFI FELLOW



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Hispanic boys reading below proficiency levels by the fourth grade—compared to 58 percent of white boys reading below proficiency levels.

Additionally, the disproportionate number of black and Hispanic young men who are unemployed or involved in the criminal justice system alone is a perilous drag on state budgets, and undermines family and community stability. These young men are more than six times as likely to be victims of murder than their white peers and account for almost half of the country's murder victims each year.

Researchers Wimer and Bloom (2014) identify that the issues are both social and institutional. They write, “The life chances of young men of color are also often compromised by their experiences in the educational system—a system that can sometimes exacerbate inequality when it serves minority students less well than their more advantaged peers” (p. 3).

Studies agree that combinations of social and institutional interventions are showing the best results in preparing BYMOC for college and career. Dukakis et al. (2014) state that “the most promising individual practices that promote college access and completion among boys and young men of color apply both to high school and college students: supportive adults and peers, high expectations, and family engagement, among others... Those more directly specific to college include development of a college-going identity, participation in learning communities, and enabling a sense of belonging” (p. 22).

COLLEGE READINESS AND SUCCESS

Preparing for college begins long before a young person reaches his senior year of high school. From the time that a young person starts school, his commitment to learning and academic performance along with the skills that he develops and the experiences that he has prepares a young person for being admitted to and persisting through college. To understand the process and take full advantage of opportunities along the way, youth and their families benefit from strong mentoring relationships that often provide critical support and guidance on topics ranging from school choice and college applications to campus living and financial aid.

Many of today's college and career readiness programs integrate the work of Dr. David Conley, an education leader with over 45 years of practice and research experience. In his **Four**

Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.



Keys to College and Career Readiness (<http://bit.ly/2mQlrb>) model, Dr. Conley (2014) argues that youth are ready when they have mastered elements in the following four key areas:

- **THINK:** “Students need to do more than retain or apply information; they have to process and manipulate it, assemble and reassemble it, examine it, question it, look for patterns in it, organize it, and present it.”
- **KNOW:** “Students need strong foundational knowledge in core academic subjects, and they also need to have an understanding of the structure of knowledge (the big ideas and how those ideas frame the study of the subject)—they need to understand that success at learning content is a function of effort much more than aptitude.”
- **ACT:** “Students need skills and techniques to take ownership and successfully manage their learning in educational and career opportunities after high school.”
- **GO:** “Students preparing for a career or to further their education beyond high school must navigate numerous potential pitfalls if they wish to make a successful transition. They must cope with issues ranging from correctly submitting postsecondary applications to knowing when to seek help or advocate for their best interests.”

As College Board (2011) reported, “Each of the students has different drivers and chose different paths to higher education. But there is a common thread: something or someone sparked their interest, spurred their engagement, and instilled in them a desire to achieve. This has an impact on persistence” (p. 22). Mentors often create the spark inside of youth that helps them realize that they can accomplish whatever they set their minds to achieving if they are willing to put in the hard work. The way in which a mentor helps nurture a young person’s growth mind-set directly influences their aspirations and commitment to learning.

Promising Practices

CAREER SUCCESS

The General Motors (GM) Student Corps (<http://bit.ly/2lfZf4y>) is an innovative student internship program that youth participants call a “leadership factory.” Since 2013, more than 500 high school students have participated in the program, earning a paycheck while developing critical leadership skills and giving back to their communities. The program pairs teams of 10 high school interns with retired GM executives and college interns to plan and complete community service projects. The youth interns practice teamwork, learn project planning, and develop communication skills as though they were operating small start-up businesses. Youth also attend financial planning seminars, complete life skills workshops, tour GM facilities, and visit colleges and universities.

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

ACADEMICS

As the Uzuri Think Tank at Robert Morris University points out, access to higher education does not necessarily mean academic success. The report states, “Educational challenges stem from lack of effective study skills as opposed to absence of ability . . . Academic success underscores the need for a strong emphasis on the development and maintenance of cogent study skills” (p. 2). To support academic achievement, mentors can help coach

youth or explore with youth effective research and study skills that can positively impact their academic performance.

Mentors can provide academic tutoring support for youth, if appropriate, or assist youth and their families in identifying tutoring programs in the local neighborhood. There are also many free resources online that mentors can help youth research and select to support their academic studies (e.g., Khan Academy).

Mentors also play a valuable role in encouraging and celebrating academic achievements ranging from class projects and tests to report cards and SATs. Motivating youth to stay focused on their academic achievement and making connections between what youth are studying in the classroom and how that relates to their community and/or their career interests is a valuable role for a mentor to play. Whether a young person receives a text message from a mentor wishing them well on test day or has a phone call with a mentor to debrief a class presentation that they were nervous about delivering, youth value the support system that a mentor provides.

With the ratio of guidance counselors to students often limiting individualized academic and career planning support, mentors can guide youth in reviewing and selecting academic courses and even school choices. In some cases, Mentors should work with young people to engage advisors and counselors who can help to ensure that their plans are in alignment with graduation requirements and career pathways. In 2016, the **California Department of Education** (<http://bit.ly/29PB47z>) noted that the national average ratio of students per counselor is 477 to 1 compared to their state ratio of 945 to 1, which ranks California last in the nation. Mentors can be part of the solution to bridge this gap and help ensure that the proper academic supports are in place for youth.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

In 2015, The Urban Institute noted, “While men of color have generally experienced increasing levels of education attainment over time, the work-related skills of young men of color has lagged behind the skills of other groups” (p. 4). The National Association of Colleges and Employers reported in its **Job Outlook 2016** (<http://bit.ly/1T1BhWq>) survey that employers are seeking candidates that have evidence of leadership skills and a strong work ethic, the ability to work in a team, communication skills (written and verbal), problem-solving skills, and initiative. Mentors can work with youth on developing and practicing these core skills thus helping youth to differentiate themselves in the college admissions process and in job interviews. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Labor developed **Skills to Pay**

Checklist of activities for mentors in both college and career readiness:

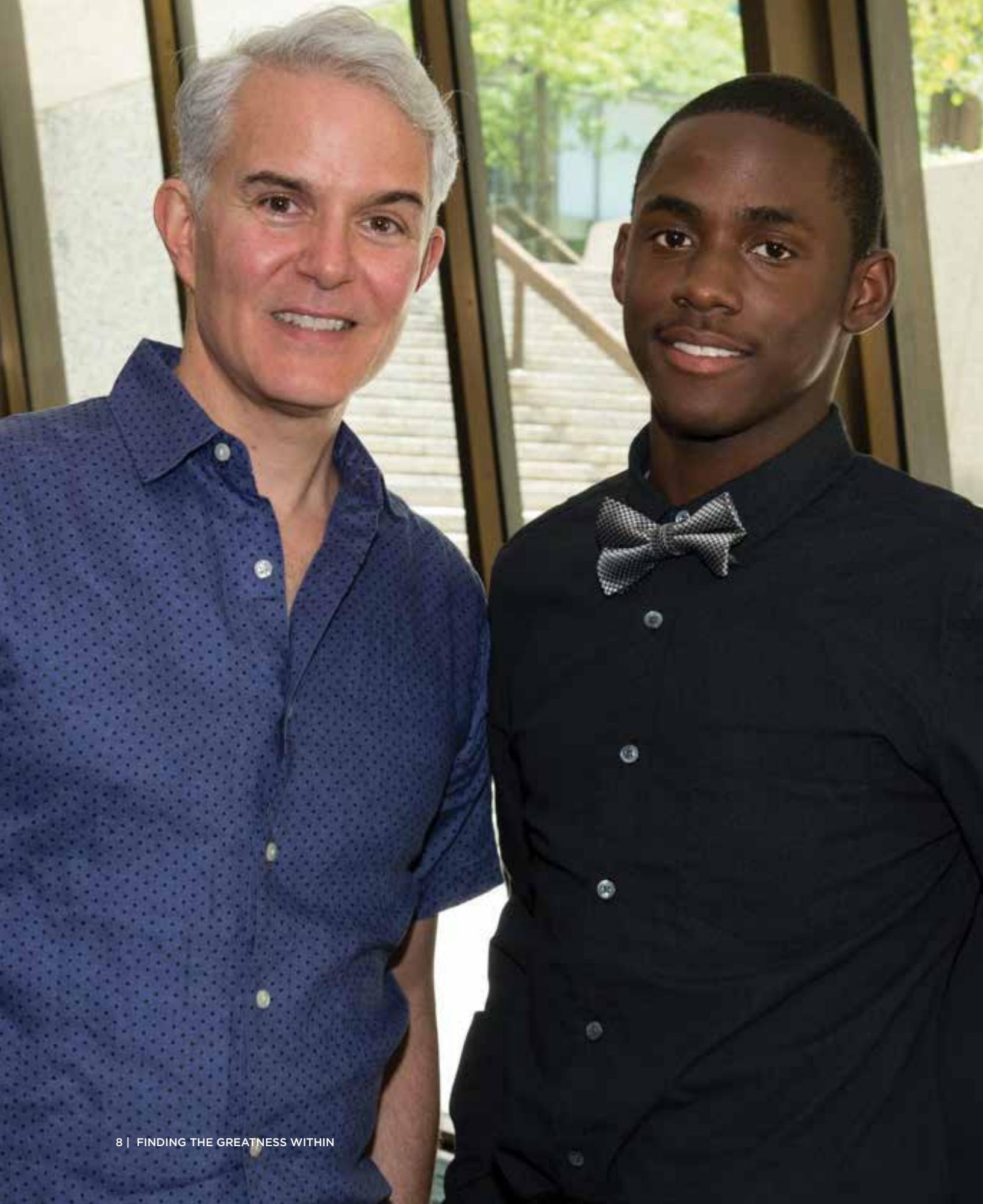
COLLEGE READINESS AND PERSISTENCE

- Academic support
- Skill development
- Volunteer service
- College research
- College visits
- College applications
- College interviews
- College persistence
- Financial aid
- College budgeting

CAREER SUCCESS

- Job shadowing
- Career talks
- Informational interviews
- Career research
- Resume writing
- Mock interviews
- Dressing for success
- Social media profiles and engagement
- Networking events
- Job fairs
- Internships
- Summer employment
- Vocational training programs and apprenticeships

Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.



the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success (<http://bit.ly/298o5hc>), which mentors can leverage for skill-building activities.

Mentors can encourage engagement and celebrate achievements in extracurricular activities that help strengthen young people's self-esteem and self-confidence. They can curate skill-building activities as part of the mentoring experience, such as art classes to enhance creativity, community festivals to explore diverse cultures and perspectives, and ropes courses to practice risk taking and goal setting.

According to the **Guide to Mentoring Boys and Young Men of Color** (<http://bit.ly/29zAvzB>) from MENTOR (2016):

"It is important that mentoring for BYMOC is approached from a strengths-based perspective. While the challenges facing BYMOC have been well documented, much less attention has been given to the strengths of these individuals and their communities . . . Identifying, respecting, and building upon the strengths of mentees, as well as their communities and social networks, can go a long way toward supporting mentoring relationships" (p. 5)

Mentors help youth to reflect on their strengths and identify opportunities to leverage and further evolve these strengths both in school and in the community. If youth have clear career aspirations, mentors can help identify the key skills needed to succeed in that career coupled with their existing strengths and work with youth to leverage opportunities to either enhance or develop skills while they are in high school.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Many high schools require students to complete community service to graduate, and many colleges evaluate applicants' engagement in community initiatives. In fact, **ABC News** (2016) (<http://abcn.ws/1JoVs0a>) highlights an increasingly greater emphasis on meaningful contributions to others, community service, and engagement with the public good."

Mentors can engage youth in exploring their community through service projects that benefit nonprofit organizations, guide reflections on their community service experiences, and encourage creative problem-solving skill building in addressing complex social issues. Volunteer opportunities can be located using resources such as **www.VolunteerMatch.org** and

“ It's amazing for us just to be able to go up to the 56th floor... that's the highest floor in the JPMorgan Chase tower.”

TFI FELLOW



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

JPMORGAN CHASE'S THE FELLOWSHIP INITIATIVE

JPMorgan Chase & Co. recognized that BYMOC face social, economic, and systematic challenges that too often impact their education and career success when it launched The Fellowship Initiative (TFI) in 2010 with a pilot in New York City. Drawing from exemplary practices from the youth development, college access, career development, and education fields, TFI was designed to determine whether the right combination of academic and leadership training, coupled with support for social and emotional development, could help BYMOC (Fellows) excel in high school and graduate from four-year colleges and universities. All of the Fellows in the pilot who completed TFI graduated from high school on time and were accepted into colleges and universities. Ninety percent or more of college costs were covered by grants and scholarships. The success of the pilot led JPMorgan Chase & Co. to expand TFI from 24 to 120 students in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City.

TFI's holistic program design, which begins engaging the Fellows starting at the end of their freshman year of high school, focuses on five key elements:

- **ACADEMICS:** TFI Fellows participate in programming in JPMorgan Chase & Co. offices three times every month throughout the school year for academic instruction and learning activities, for over 270 hours of learning time outside of school each year.
- **COLLEGE PREPARATION:** Fellows receive pre-college support including SAT and ACT prep classes, opportunities to visit colleges, financial aid assistance, and help with scholarships, personal statements, and college applications. TFI also educates and supports the Fellows' families throughout the college planning process.

■ **LEADERSHIP:** TFI programming includes robust leadership development and experiential learning opportunities for Fellows to discover interests and learn new skills, fostering personal growth, self-confidence, and perseverance.

■ **MENTORING:** Each Fellow is paired with a dedicated JPMorgan Chase & Co. mentor who provides regular guidance about academic issues, college planning, financial aid, and other career pathways over the course of several years. Fellows also have numerous opportunities to meet successful professionals across a broad range of careers, from White House staff to college professors.

■ **SOCIAL SUPPORT AND NETWORKS:** Supporting the Fellows' development outside academics is critical to setting the stage for their personal growth. This approach helps the Fellows manage the challenges of their daily lives, resolve interpersonal conflicts, maintain social relationships that reinforce their academic and personal development, and boost their self-esteem. It also builds communication and trust among the teachers, school counselors, and TFI staff with each Fellow and his family.

In addition to these core program elements, Fellows also have the opportunity to engage in experiential learning through partnerships with Outward Bound and The Experiment in International Living. With Outward Bound, Fellows engaged in high-impact activities both in the classroom and in wilderness settings that resulted in higher levels of confidence and collaboration. The Experiment in International Living facilitated an immersive summer abroad experience in South Africa for the Fellows, which challenged them to get out of their comfort zone, develop leadership and intercultural skills, and gain global perspectives.

When Fellows and mentors reflect on their engagement in TFI, several key themes emerge.

■ **Fellows have a strong sense of responsibility to give back and to pay it forward.**

One Fellow from the pilot recalled being told that his cohort was full of trailblazers and their results would determine if the program would continue. That was a pivotal point where the cohort started “kicking it” so that future groups would have “the same amazing opportunities” since “Fellows are like a family.”

■ **Program managers play a valuable role serving as second mentors for the Fellows.**

When reflecting on the impact of his “coach,” who is also the program manager, one Fellow shared that his challenge was more about becoming aware of how his behavior and the kinds of things he would say impacted the way people perceived him.

■ **Travel and experiential learning opportunities are highly valued as opportunities to widen perspectives.**

One Fellow shared, “It’s been amazing these past three years. I’ve been able to go to places and meet many people that I could only imagine doing. It’s amazing what this program has done for a lot of us knowing that we don’t really have these resources out there to help us. A lot of teenagers . . . a lot of kids of color . . . we’ve been put in this environment that is really harsh and is forcing us to do ugly things rather than focusing on our education and our futures. This program is giving us another option rather than to be in the streets and risking our lives doing something that you know is not worth it.”

■ **Attending sessions in a corporate office setting is an important part of the program design.**

One Fellow shared, “Because TFI is held at the JPMorgan Chase corporate headquarters, it was an opportunity to get a taste of the real world. It is very important to see how people live different realities based on where they come from.” He describes his time with TFI as “a journey of

self-discovery” and recognized that TFI involved “multiple people working with one mission” which led him to understand the meaning of “it takes a village.”

■ **Mentors learn and get back as much as the Fellows.**

One TFI mentor said, “Advocacy is part of my DNA, [but] I can feel paralyzed as a white guy who had a pretty good upbringing—had what I needed—but am still very concerned about our society. This program mirrored what I think is important to do in terms of advocacy. I can’t change society but I can try to change my own backyard by giving part of myself to something that I see as successful.”

“TFI doesn’t make you great; it helps you find the greatness within.”

TFI ALUM NOAH MORTON

www.allforgood.org. If there are limited volunteer experiences available, mentors can work with youth to identify a local issue, develop a project to address the issue and complete the project.

Volunteer service is also a valuable networking opportunity for youth to expand their connections in the community, explore diverse perspectives, and learn about other people's college and career experiences.

GETTING ACCEPTED AND THROUGH COLLEGE

COLLEGE RESEARCH

“ A lot of teenagers, a lot of kids of color... we've been put in this environment that is really harsh and is forcing us to do ugly things rather than focusing on our education and our futures. TFI is giving us another option rather than to be in the streets and risk our lives doing something that isn't worth it.”

TFI FELLOW



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

There are over 5,000 colleges and universities in the United States. For youth, especially those who are the first to go to college in their families, it can be overwhelming when they start to research college options. Mentors play an important role in assisting youth with researching and prioritizing college options based on what they want to achieve in their college experience.

Mentors help youth think through the criteria of their search, looking at factors such as academic program rankings, geography, cost, extracurricular activities, and career services. Mentors should challenge youth to identify both safety schools and reach schools in their college research. Two popular guides for college research are **Peterson's** (www.petersons.com) and **U.S. News & World Report** (<http://bit.ly/2m9Yy1Y>).

COLLEGE VISITS

Youth can get very excited about what a college can offer them after reading about the school online or in college admissions brochures. A visit to a college campus can either confirm those feelings or convince a young person that a school is not a good fit for him. Mentors can guide youth and their families on what to consider when visiting potential colleges, brainstorm with youth a list of questions to ask, and help youth in reflecting on their campus visits to identify the pros and cons of each school.

Mentor Michigan published a **campus visit checklist** (<http://bit.ly/1QXAAAh>) that serves as a guide for mentors to review with youth and their families what to consider before and during a college visit.

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

For many youth, college applications can feel like a daunting task, especially the writing of a personal statement or college admission essay. Mentors can coach youth throughout the process of brainstorming and outlining what to focus on in

their application essays, prioritize stories that they want to communicate in their essays, and proofread essays multiple times with youth. **The National Association of College Admission Counseling** (<http://bit.ly/2nMGDuP>) and **U.S. News & World Report** (<http://bit.ly/2nN5huW>) both offer valuable tips for mentors and youth to consider while preparing college essays.

Mentors can also work with youth to break down the application process into smaller steps and develop together a timeline for completing each step. Throughout the process, mentors should celebrate the completion of each task to acknowledge the effort and progress being made. This motivates young people and keeps them focused on fully completing their applications on time and competently.

COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

Some colleges require an admissions interview. Mentors can facilitate mock interviews with youth to help them build their confidence, practice thinking through how they would respond to diverse questions, and visualize themselves in the experience. Mentors can also work with youth to brainstorm a list of questions that they could ask during the interview to gather additional context on the school.

CollegeView (<http://bit.ly/2eUzCnM>) offers some practical advice in preparing for a college interview including a list of the most common interview questions that college admissions officers often ask.

COLLEGE PERSISTENCE

Getting into college is one thing; getting through college successfully is another thing. Mentors play a critical role for youth as they transition from high school to college and as they navigate through the college experience including selecting courses, engaging in campus life, networking, and building relationships. Having a champion and an advocate in a mentor can help maintain a young person's motivation and drive throughout college and beyond.

For many BYMOC, persisting through college often entails balancing several other commitments simultaneously. According to the College Board (2011) young men are often overwhelmed outside of the classroom with having the sole or dominant responsibility of supporting their families, overcoming difficult home or community situations, raising children, and experiencing periods of incarceration or managing probation (p. 11). Mentors can help BYMOC in prioritizing their responsibilities in the short term while remaining focused on long-term goals,

Checklist for mentoring programs to consider in supporting BYMOC along their path to college and career success:

- Integrate the research-informed and practitioner-approved “Elements of Effective Practice” outlined in the Guide to Mentoring Boys and Young Men of Color (<http://bit.ly/29zAvzB>).
- Leverage existing college and career readiness resources including those highlighted throughout this report.
- Stay informed on the latest research related to BYMOC.
- Build, manage, and sustain diverse partnerships that aid in recruiting mentors.
- Equip mentors with training, tools, and experiences to have with youth that support them along their pathway to college and career.
- Focus on retaining mentors for BYMOC and program partnerships, as deeper and sustained partnerships serving BYMOC will provide more of the holistic supports needed.

Promising Practices

CAREER SUCCESS

Year Up (www.yearup.org) is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to close the Opportunity Divide by providing urban young adults with the skills, experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education. They operate a high support, high expectation program model that combines marketable job skills, stipends, internships, and college credits. Since its founding in 2000, Year Up has served over 14,000 young adults and provided interns for over 250 corporate partners. Eighty-five percent of Year Up graduates are employed or enrolled in postsecondary education within four months of completing the program. Companies ranging from Salesforce to JPMorgan Chase to Comcast have partnered with Year Up to provide internships and job opportunities as well as capacity building and training support.

including graduation from college and securing employment with growth opportunities.

The College Board report also highlights, “Some students make educational choices that sideline or dismiss their goals or aspirations. Many students are predisposed to make safe choices or to feel that certain options are not obtainable because of their precollege experiences where they’re not expected to succeed” (p. 25). This is why mentors play such a valuable role in encouraging persistence by raising expectations for BYMOC and helping them to discover and believe in their potential. By setting an expectation of success and providing the support system to work through challenges and celebrate achievements, mentors influence positive academic outcomes. According to MENTOR (2016), “Through strong relationships with mentors, the impact of the challenges BYMOC face can be mitigated and their strengths and the strengths of their communities, families, and cultures can be drawn on to bolster their potential for success” (p. 5).

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

FINANCIAL AID

There are multiple sources of financial aid to consider when trying to finance a college education, ranging from Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to scholarships and work-study opportunities on campus or in the community. Mentors can help research financial aid options with youth and their families, breakdown the eligibility requirements, and guide them through the application process. Many communities offer financial aid workshops, which mentors can help locate for youth and their families to attend and learn more about their college financing options.

Ways to Pay for College (<http://bit.ly/1TUDCFE>) from Mentor Michigan outlines diverse college financing options for youth and their families to consider. Another valuable resource is **FAFSA: The How-to Guide for High School Students (And the Adults Who Help Them)** (<http://bit.ly/1IISq2h>), published by the Center for New York City Affairs, an applied policy research organization based at The New School. This guide is especially helpful for youth who will be the first to go to college in their families as well as youth and families who are new to the country.

COLLEGE BUDGETING

Mentors can work with youth on developing a college budget including those expenses outside of tuition, room, and board, such as transportation, books, and class supplies. It is also helpful for mentors to work with youth to research tips on saving money leading up to and throughout college as well as minimizing college expenses. JPMorgan Chase & Co. created the **Your Path to Savings worksheet** (<http://bit.ly/1oG3Bn2>) to help individuals develop a personal budget, and Mint.com offers a **college budget template** (<http://bit.ly/1WZmNrl>) that mentors can use with youth.

Mentors can also engage youth in an online financial literacy simulation called **SPENT** (www.playspent.org), which illustrates the connection between our financial decisions and the consequences that we could encounter in life. Financial coaching is invaluable for youth both during college and beyond as they transition to their first full-time job.

CAREER SUCCESS

Many youth transition from high school to college to career. However, there are alternative pathways that youth can take straight from high school to career via vocational training and certification programs, apprenticeships, and joining the military. Regardless of the path they choose, a mentor can play a valuable role in helping youth to explore their career options, prepare to enter the workforce, and successfully obtain a job. Mentors can also be influential in helping a young person's family understand the process of entering various career pathways and the opportunities to fully leverage to accelerate a young person's career success.

As Urban Institute (2015) reported, "Young men of color tend to live in low-income, racially segregated neighborhoods, driven both by income inequality and housing discrimination. Their social isolation worsens their job prospects partly by limiting their 'social capital' for labor markets. In other words, they often lack connections to individuals that can help them find or secure employment" (p. 3).

When youth have limited access to opportunities that can expand their networks and struggle to ask for help, they fall further behind. As the **College Board** (2011) (<http://bit.ly/2nzpF3x>) reported, "Students struggle to ask for help for many reasons. They feel responsible for taking care of things themselves. They don't know what to ask. They don't

“ If you really want to have an impact, you have to bring your full self to the conversation. If you are going to do it, you need to be all in. Showing up, being vested, being consistent, being reliable is the key to really having an impactful mentor/mentee relationship.”

TFI MENTOR



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

“ Mentorship matters. I think sometimes it’s just knowing that someone cares. It’s not even so much the day-to-day interaction—you don’t necessarily need to talk every day. I think what’s important is that there is someone out there that if you have a question that would otherwise paralyze you, that you can ask.”

TFI MENTOR



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

know what help is available” (p. 34). Mentors can help eliminate this struggle among BYMOC and expand their network of contacts thus heightening their chances for career success.

MENTOR advises mentors, “An important part of empowering a mentee and his family is assisting them to self-advocate, equipping them with the tools to understand their existing social capital and to navigate potential barriers to success” (p. 15).

EXPLORING CAREERS

JOB SHADOWING

Through job shadowing experiences, mentors can provide youth the opportunity to explore diverse career pathways and get a front row seat to a typical day on the job. The experience helps youth to determine what they enjoy as well as filter out those career options that they do not wish to pursue.

Whether mentors are hosting a young person themselves or helping to set up job shadowing opportunities with coworkers or others in their professional networks, it is important for mentors to coach youth on how to prepare for job shadowing opportunities. This entails researching the company and the career pathway as well as developing key questions to ask and proper etiquette to follow before, during, and after being hosted for the experience.

CAREER TALKS

Mentors are often invited to serve on panel discussions and present their career journey to expose youth to diverse career pathways and career information. In classroom presentations or in small groups, mentors can invite young people to interview them to learn more about a typical day or week on the job, to explore the context behind their career decisions, and to discover the valuable lessons they’ve learned throughout their career thus far.

Mentors can also share tangible tips for youth to follow in areas such as how to expand one’s professional network, how to make the most of an internship experience, and how to differentiate one’s self in a job interview.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Professionals at all stages of their careers often engage in informational interviews to learn about other fields, business opportunities, innovation, and professional networks. Mentors

Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.



can work with youth to set up and prepare for informational interviews where they can learn about specific careers that they are interested in pursuing as well as build and expand their professional network.

Dr. Randall Hansen of Quintessential Careers offers **75 questions** (<http://bit.ly/2dSWDvj>) to consider when preparing for informational interviews. Mentors can review this list of questions with youth, identify their top 10 favorite questions, and develop some questions of their own in preparation for informational interviews. Mentors can also play an important role after the interview in helping youth process their experience to call out key lessons, new questions that have surfaced, and any changes to their career aspirations.

CAREER RESEARCH

Mentors can work with youth to explore the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** (<http://bit.ly/2igZ0t1>), available online, which is full of career information including key responsibilities of each career, required training and education, pay information, and the outlook for hundreds of occupations. This resource can help youth to prioritize careers that they are most interested in exploring further and can continue to be a resource for youth even after they have landed their first job and are mapping their career goals.

PREPARING TO ENTER THE WORKFORCE

RÉSUMÉ WRITING

Mentors play an important role in guiding a young person through the creation of a résumé and especially in proofreading the final draft to ensure the highest quality product. The site **www.Monster.com** is an example of a platform that provides several resources that help with creating a résumé.

For youth developing their first résumé (with little to no work experience), a mentor can help them think through the experiences that they have had and the skills that they could offer an employer as they enter the workforce.

MOCK INTERVIEWS

Engaging in job interviews can be stressful for youth and adults alike. Mentors can facilitate mock interviews with youth to prepare them for internship opportunities and jobs. Through role-playing potential scenes that could unfold in an actual interview, youth get more comfortable in an interview setting and learn to anticipate and respond to questions with greater ease.

Dr. Travis Bradberry, award-winning author of Emotional Intelligence 2.0, shares 50 of the most common interview questions and interview preparation tips in **How to Ace the 50 Most Common Interview Questions** (<http://bit.ly/1yRH0sd>).

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Mentors can coach youth on how to properly dress for interviews, internships, jobs, and informational interviews as well as how to inquire about dress codes in advance of their first day on the job. If financial resources are tight, mentors can work with youth to locate nonprofit organizations that provide professional clothes at a discounted price.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Since so many young people are actively engaging every day on social media, mentors can work with youth to update and manage their online presence. This entails professionalizing their public profiles including the photos that they use, their e-mail address, their profile descriptions, and the account settings related to who can access the content that they post. Mentors can coach youth on how to avoid over-sharing and how to leverage networking opportunities via social media, including the creation and maintenance of a LinkedIn profile.

The company BrandYourself offers a free **online reputation management guide** (<http://bit.ly/1tTbGVA>) that mentors can review with youth to diagnose their online reputation, build a solid foundational presence, and fix a negative search result.

OBTAINING A JOB

NETWORKING EVENTS

Mentors play a valuable role in helping youth build their professional networks. They can invite youth to join them in attending work and community events that expose them to a diversity of settings, give them the opportunity to practice communicating with a variety of professionals, and learn proper business etiquette. The more networking events young people attend, the more confident they become and the more likely they are to access new opportunities.

Business consultant Bernard Marr advises individuals to reflect on how they communicate through their body language as well in **The 15 Biggest Body Language Mistakes to Watch Out For** (<http://bit.ly/2nhqaSG>). Helping youth to effectively communicate nonverbally is another way that mentors can prepare them for networking events and interviews.

Menu of opportunities for corporations to support youth in preparing for college and career:

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- Employee speaking opportunities
- Corporate office tours and behind the scenes experiences
- Job shadowing
- Informational interviews or networking events for career exploration
- Pro bono/skill-based volunteerism to build mentoring program capacity (i.e., marketing, measurement and evaluation, technology, curriculum development)

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Internships
- Fellowships
- Summer employment
- Project-based learning opportunities (i.e., competitions)
- Sponsorship

MENTORING PROGRAMS

- Transportation (i.e., college visits)
- College application fees and scholarships
- Dressing for success funds
- Travel experiences (i.e., domestic or international education programs)

JOB FAIRS

Job Fairs are often hosted by local colleges and universities, regional employers, and community organizations. Mentors can accompany youth to a job fair to help them get the most out of the experience in terms of their discussions with recruiters and the career information that they gather.

Mentors can also work with youth in advance of a job fair, ensuring that they have ample practice introducing themselves, talking about the experience highlighted on their résumé, and preparing questions to discuss with recruiters. Mentors can review *Business Insider's 11 Tips to Get Something Useful Out of a Job Fair* (<http://read.bi/1kCJdzj>) with youth.

INTERNSHIPS

Mentors can both host youth for internship opportunities as well as support youth in researching and securing internship opportunities.

According to a **CNN report in partnership with CareerBuilder.com** (<http://cnn.it/1qE5q3L>),

“Helping someone is like giving somebody a leg up to go on and do great things. You have to take that very seriously but have fun at the same time!”

TFI MENTOR



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

“Besides getting a foot in the door with a potential employer and looking good on a résumé, internships have other advantages: the opportunity to test-drive a career, chance to network, establishing relationships with mentors, possible college credit or certification, an introduction to the field’s culture and etiquette, accumulating new skills, and gaining a real world perspective on an occupation.”

Mentors can also help youth reflect on and process their internship experiences in line with their career aspirations.

For youth interested in fields with limited internship opportunities, they can work with mentors to identify and outline projects that provide valuable work experience, skill building, and networking opportunities. Taking this more entrepreneurial route can still deliver the benefits of a traditional internship experience while demonstrating even greater initiative.

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

Mentors can host youth for summer employment opportunities and/or support youth in researching and securing summer jobs. Helping a young person think through his goals for the summer

and mapping out the job opportunities that most closely align to those goals is a valuable role for a mentor to play.

In the report, *Expanding Economic Opportunity for Young Men and Boys of Color Through Employment and Training*, Urban Institute (2015) points to a correlation between engaging in summer youth employment programs and increases in school attendance rates, decreases in violent-crime arrests, and a reduction in risky and violent behaviors in New York City and Boston (p. 28).

As youth begin earning a salary for the first time, mentors can support them with managing their paychecks by helping them open a bank account, develop a personal budget, and set financial goals.

When youth enter the workforce, there are bound to be obstacles that they face with colleagues and managers. Mentors can work with youth to process these situations, develop solutions, and learn from each of these experiences as a natural part of professional maturity.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS / APPRENTICESHIPS

For youth that are interested in pursuing a career in a specific trade, such as carpentry or manufacturing, mentors can support them in researching, preparing for, and securing vocational training opportunities and hands-on apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship USA (<http://bit.ly/2fRQEUX>) is a resource from the U.S. Department of Labor that features employer resources, apprenticeship opportunities, and apprentice success stories.

CONCLUSION

There is no shortage of opportunities for mentors to support youth throughout their preparation for both college and their career. Despite the process feeling overwhelming at times and daunting, mentors can help youth and their families manage their stress, break down the process into digestible tasks, and celebrate progress and achievements along the way.

For many BYMOC, engaging in mentoring relationships focused on college and career readiness is very much a journey in self-discovery, an opportunity to define their identity and pursue their goals with the support of a caring adult. As MENTOR (2016) states, “The development of a healthy ethnic identity in minority youth is more likely to result in positive academic, psychological, and social outcomes” (p. 15).

“ What I’ve learned is, you just take it day by day—you don’t try to assert this huge agenda because I think as business people, we go in with this list of, okay, this is what we need to accomplish and this is how it’s going to go. You just really have to learn to let things grow organically and listen more than you speak. And to be very patient... I’ve learned more soft skills and strengthened my interpersonal skills as a mentor... it’s been fantastic.”

TFI MENTOR



Photo courtesy of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Ronald Ferguson at the Harvard Kennedy School writes (2016), “BYMOC need help learning to resist negative peer influences and need strategies for coping effectively with adults who respond to them based on negative stereotypes” (p. VII). Mentors provide BYMOC with a support system that helps them to set aspirational and realistic goals and to remain focused on achieving those goals despite the obstacles that surface along the way. Strong mentoring relationships can bolster the self-confidence and determination of BYMOC while widening their perspectives and expanding their access to opportunities.

Ferguson writes, “Our challenge is to aim higher together by fostering conditions in homes, schools, peer groups, and communities that enable instead of stifle BYMOC achievement” (p. VIII). Mentoring programs, mentors, companies, and policy-makers can all play an important role in preparing BYMOC for college, ensuring their persistence through college, and ultimately achieving career success.

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APPENDIX

Through efforts like JPMorgan Chase's The Fellowship Initiative and My Brother's Keeper Alliance, we are increasing access to quality mentoring experiences. These initiatives demonstrate the potential for greater collective action, public/private partnerships, and mentoring program innovation. Mentors play a critical role in the success stories that inspire us today and will continue to play a valuable role in the success stories of tomorrow, especially when those who have benefitted from being mentored become mentors themselves. MENTOR's report, ***The Mentoring Effect*** (<http://bit.ly/1MJYUlj>), highlights that 86 percent of all youth who were mentored report that they are interested in becoming mentors. TFI alum Noah Morton is focused on supporting younger generations and provides this advice, "There are no accidents, no coincidences, no chances nor probability. As you continue your quest, continue to walk with purpose."

The following outline ways that mentoring programs, mentors, companies and policy-makers can support college and career success for young men of color.

MENTORING PROGRAMS

- ✓ Integrate the research-informed and practitioner-approved "Elements of Effective Practice" outlined in the ***Guide to Mentoring Boys and Young Men of Color*** (<http://bit.ly/29zAvzB>).
- ✓ Leverage existing college and career readiness resources including those highlighted throughout this report.
- ✓ Stay informed on the latest research related to BYMOC.
- ✓ Build, manage, and sustain diverse partnerships that aid in recruiting mentors.
- ✓ Equip mentors with training, tools, and experiences to have with youth that support them along their pathway to college and career.
- ✓ Integrate mentors into college and career readiness programming (for example, include mentors in college tours; have mentors work with students on personal essays).
- ✓ Help youth stay on track by providing mentors with goals and timelines, encouraging mentors to work with youth on meeting deadlines and achieving goals.
- ✓ Encourage mentors to reach out and work with families in the process (e.g., include mentors and families in FAFSA workshops).
- ✓ Focus on retaining mentors for BYMOC and program partnerships as deeper and sustained partnerships serving BYMOC will provide more of the holistic supports needed.

APPENDIX

MENTORS

- ✓ Spend time building a relationship and developing trust with young people, practicing empathy, and exploring both their challenges and strengths.
- ✓ Work with youth to develop specific college and career goals as well as action plans and timelines to achieving their goals.
- ✓ Use texts and other communication tools to remind youth of key deadlines.
- ✓ Use this guide to integrate college and career readiness into their mentoring activities to inspire, prepare, and challenge youth to reach their full potential.
- ✓ Know when to ask for help and leverage resources to provide timely, accurate guidance.
- ✓ Help youth stay focused and motivated by celebrating their progress and achievements as well as reflecting on what they are learning, their identity, and how they are growing personally and professionally.

COMPANIES

- ✓ Provide financial and other support (e.g., space) for college and career readiness activities as well as youth mentoring.
- ✓ Engage employees as mentors and skill-based volunteers who can help to build the capacity of mentoring programs to reach more youth.
- ✓ Offer project-based learning and employment opportunities through internships, apprenticeships, summer jobs, and full-time work.
- ✓ Acknowledge that while investing in the future workforce, employees that engage in mentoring activities are likely to enhance valuable soft skills themselves, such as collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity.
- ✓ Recognize employees who volunteer as mentors by highlighting their service and impact.

POLICY-MAKERS

- ✓ Examine existing policies and/or create new policies to provide greater college and career readiness supports for BYMOC as well as institutional changes that set BYMOC up for success at an earlier age.
- ✓ Partner with leading researchers to understand the complexity of issues facing BYMOC.
- ✓ Engage on the frontline as mentors for BYMOC in communities across the country.



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